

Principle of reasonable accommodation

❖ Context

- The Karnataka High Court had ruled in favour of the State's circular that students in educational institutions should only wear prescribed uniforms. It rejected an argument based on the principle of 'reasonable accommodation'.

❖ Key Highlights

❖ About the principle

- Reasonable accommodation' is a principle that **promotes equality, enables the grant of positive rights and prevents discrimination** based on disability, health condition or personal belief.
- **Article 2** of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (**UNCRPD**) defines reasonable accommodation as **necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden** to ensure enjoyment or exercise of human rights by PwDs on an equal basis.
- **ILO in its recommendation on HIV/AIDS and the world of work**, defines it as any reasonably practicable modification or adjustment to a job or to the workplace which enables a person living with HIV or AIDS to have access to, or participate or advance in, employment.
- The **general principle** is that **reasonable accommodation should be provided, unless some undue hardship is caused** by such accommodation.

❖ Its position in India

- The principle has been defined under **Rights of Disabilities Act 2016** as -
 - *"necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments, without imposing a disproportionate or undue burden in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise of rights equally with others"*
- The Act **mandates** that the appropriate **Government** shall take **necessary steps to ensure reasonable accommodation** for persons with disabilities.
- The SC in **Jeeja Ghosh and Another v. Union of India and Others (2016)** case had defined equality as not only preventing discrimination but also embracing the notion of positive rights, affirmative action and reasonable accommodation.

Rights of Foreigners

❖ Context

- The Union government wants the Supreme Court's help to **frame a law with "long-lasting implications" on the rights of foreigners** who violate visa conditions.
- The government argues that **issuance of visas is a "sovereign function"**. There cannot be any remedy in court for a foreigner who breaks visa conditions.

Fundamental Rights available to both Citizens and Foreigners	Fundamental Rights Available Only to Citizens of India
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 14: Equality before the law and equal protection of laws. • Article 20: Protection in respect of conviction for offenses. • Article 21: Protection of life and personal liberty. • Article 21A: Right to elementary education. • Article 22: Protection against arrest and detention in certain cases. • Article 23: Prohibition of traffic in human beings and forced labor. • Article 24: Prohibition of employment of children in factories etc. • Article 25: Freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion. • Article 26: Freedom to manage religious affairs. • Article 27: Freedom from payment of taxes for promotion of any religion. • Article 28: Freedom from attending religious instruction or worship in certain educational institutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 15: Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. • Article 16: Equality of opportunity in matters of public employment. • Article 19: Protection of six rights related to freedom: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Of speech and expression; b) To assemble peaceably and without arms; c) To form associations or unions; d) To move freely throughout the territory of India; e) To reside and settle in any part of the territory of India; and f) To practice any profession, or to carry on any occupation, trade or business. • Article 29: Protection of language, script and culture of minorities. • Article 30: Right of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions.

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Fixing Drug Prices

❖ Context

- Consumers may have to **pay more for medicines and medical devices** if the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) allows a **price hike of over 10% in the drugs and devices** listed under the **National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM)**, this coming month.

❖ Key Highlights

- The escalation which is expected to have an **impact on nearly 800 drugs** and devices is propelled by the rise in the Wholesale Price Index (WPI).
- Lobby groups that represent domestic pharmaceutical companies have been engaging with the Central Government to ask it to extend the 10% annual hike to scheduled formulations under price control.

❖ Pricing Mechanism

- **All medicines** under the NLEM are **under price regulation**.
- As per the **Drugs (Prices) Control Order 2013**:
 - **Scheduled drugs**, about 15% of the pharma market, are allowed an increase by the government as per the WPI.
 - The rest **85% are allowed an automatic increase of 10% every year**.
- The pharma lobby is now asking for at least a 10% increase for scheduled drugs to rather than going by the WPI.
- **Prices are revised** when there is a **rise in the price of bulk drugs, raw materials, cost of transport**, freight rates, utilities like fuel, power, diesel, and changes in taxes and duties.

❖ Price Monitoring and Resource Unit (PMRU)

- It's an **initiative of NPPA**.
- The NPPA has set up **12 Price monitoring and resource units in various States and UTs**.
- It has planned to set up such units in all states and UTs.
- **Objective**:
 - To have **better outreach of NPPA in the states** as these units will help the NPPA and State drug controller to ensure the accessibility of drugs at affordable prices.
- The PMRUs are societies registered under **Societies Registration Act, 1860**.

❖ Price Regulator NPPA

- Set up in **1997**.
- It is an **attached office of the Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP), Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers**.
- **Functions**:
 - To **implement and enforce the provisions of the Drugs Price Control Order (DPCO), 1995/2013** in accordance with the powers delegated to it.
 - To undertake and/or sponsor relevant **studies in respect of pricing of drugs/formulations**.
 - To **monitor the availability of drugs, identify shortages**, if any, and to take remedial steps.
 - To **collect/maintain data** on production, exports and imports, market share of individual companies, profitability of companies etc. for bulk drugs and formulations.
 - To **deal with all legal matters** arising out of the decisions of the Authority.
 - To **render advice to the Central Government** on changes/revisions in the drug policy.
 - To **render assistance to the Central Government** in the parliamentary matters relating to the drug pricing.

News in Between the Lines

World Happiness Report 2022



❖ Context

- Recently, **Finland topped the list for the fifth time in a row**, according to the **10th edition** of the World Happiness Report.

❖ Key Highlights

- Finland was followed by **Denmark, Iceland, Switzerland, and the Netherlands**.
- Among other western countries, while the **United States** managed to bag the **16th position**, **Britain was ranked 17th** and **France 20th**.
- **India** continued to fare poorly in the world happiness index, with its position marginally improving to **136 as against last year's 139**.
- India was one among the countries that witnessed, over the past 10 years, **a fall in life evaluations by more than a full point on the 0 to 10 scale**.
- Among the South Asian nations, **only Taliban-ruled Afghanistan fared worse than India**.

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World Happiness Report

- **Afghanistan** was named the most unhappy country in the world, ranking last on the index of 146 countries.
- **Nepal (84), Bangladesh (94), Pakistan (121) and Sri Lanka (127)** managed to get better ranks in the list.

❖ **About the Report**

- **Published by-** United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN).
- It evaluates levels of happiness by taking into account factors such as **GDP, social support, personal freedom, and levels of corruption** in each nation.
- The SDSN, launched in 2012 under the **auspices of the United Nations Secretary-General**.

Himalayan Griffons



❖ **Context**

- Recently, At least **100 vultures all Himalayan griffons** died of suspected poisoning in Assam.

❖ **Key Highlights**

- In January this year, poisoned carcasses of two cows claimed the lives of 23 vultures in the Dhola area of Tinsukia district in eastern Assam.
- These **vultures belonged to the oriental white-backed and slender-billed species**.
- A study by the Bombay Natural History Society and other organizations in the 1990s found that the population of the Gyps group — Himalayan griffon, white-backed and slender-billed are among its members — in India and Nepal **declined from about 40 million by 99.9% in just two decades**.

❖ **About Himalayan Griffons**

- The Himalayan vulture (*Gyps himalayensis*) or Himalayan griffon vulture is an **Old World vulture native to the Himalayas and the adjoining Tibetan Plateau**.
- **Old World vultures** are vultures that are found in the Old World, i.e. the continents of Europe, Asia and Africa.
- They **belong to the family Accipitridae**, which also includes eagles, buzzards, kites, and hawks.
- It is **one of the two largest Old World vultures and true raptors**.
- **Habitat:**
 - The Himalayan vulture lives mainly in the **higher regions of the Himalayas and the Tibetan Plateau**.
- **Distribution:**
 - Distributed from **Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Iran to Pakistan to India, Nepal, Bhutan to western China and Mongolia**.
- **Threats:**
 - Himalayan vultures are susceptible to **toxicity induced by diclofenac**.
- **Protection Status:**
 - **IUCN- Near Threatened**.

Golden Langur

❖ **Context**

- A recent study by scientists has suggested a significant decline in the habitat of Golden Langur (*Trachypithecus geei*).

❖ **Key Highlights**

- The results indicate that **out of the total range extent (66,320 km²), only 12,265 km² (18.49%) is suitable for the species at present**.
- It will further be reduced to 8884 km² by the year 2031, **indicating major range contraction**.
- These suitable habitats are largely **scattered and fragmented in the southern range of the species**.





❖ About Golden Langur

- Golden langurs are **recognized by the color of their fur, for which they are named.**
 - It has been observed that their **fur changes color depending on the season and geography** (region they live in).
 - The **color of the young differs from that of adults** in that it is almost pure white.
- **Habitat:**
 - Golden langurs occupy **moist evergreen and tropical deciduous forests** as well as **some riverine areas** and **savannas** in Assam and Bhutan.
- **Distribution:**
 - It is **only found in western Assam, India, and southern Bhutan.**
 - Their habitat is limited to the region bounded by four geographical landmarks: the foothills of Bhutan(north), the Manas river (east), the Sankosh river (west), and the Brahmaputra river (South).
- **Threats:**
 - The main reason for low numbers of golden langurs is because of their **localized habitat and the rapid loss of this habitat due to deforestation.**
- **Protection Status:**
 - IUCN – Endangered.
 - WPA 1972- Schedule I.
 - CITES - Appendix I.

World's Largest Solar Tree



❖ Context

- CSIR's Central Mechanical Engineering Research Institute (CMERI) has developed "**world's largest solar tree**" which was inaugurated in **Ludhiana** on Monday.

❖ Key Highlights

- A solar tree is a **decorative structure, designed to resemble a tree, where the leaves are fitted with solar panels** to convert solar energy to electricity.
- It is certified by **Guinness World Records** as the largest solar tree.
- The total solar PV panel **surface area is 309.83 square metres**, surpassing the previous record of 67 square metres.
- This one is huge and has **53.6 kilowatts per hour** power generating capacity.
- It will be able to provide **average energy requirements of a small community/village consisting of 100 households.**
- **Significance:**
 - These solar trees have **wide applications** such as distributed power generation to **cater to the needs of different integrated farming activities of :**
 - Charging e- tractors, e-power tillers, EV charging station,
 - Running agriculture pumps for irrigation needs, solar-based cooking system for food preparation needs at farm site,
 - Powering cold storage needs of farm produce thereby increasing the shelf life.
 - **Maintain the demand-supply price balance of agricultural produce** which will be beneficial not only to farmers but also to consumers.

Marikamba Jatra

❖ Context

- Kote Marikamba Jatre, is a **fair held once in two years**, attracting lakhs of people.
- People from all castes take part in the event. **Muslims and Christians also offer harake**, an offering to the deity for fulfilment of a wish.

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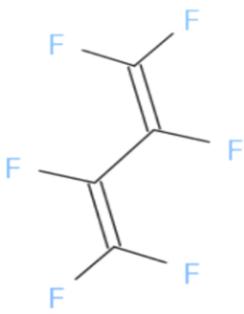




❖ Key Highlights

- On this occasion, a **high chariot** carrying the image of **goddess Marikamba Devi**, is carried out on a **procession**.
- The goddess, a **form of Durga or Parvati**, was the **family deity of the Nayaka dynasty**.
- The Marikamba Temple in Sagar was **built in 16th century** by the Nayakas.

C4F6 (hexafluoro-1,3-butadiene)



❖ Context

- The supply of chemical, C4F6, from Russia and Ukraine is getting affected, due to the conflict, impacting the already stressed semiconductor industry.

❖ Key Highlights

- **C4F6 (hexafluoro-1,3-butadiene)** is a **colourless** and **extremely flammable gas**.
- It is critical in semiconductor manufacturing as it is used in the **process of etching thin oxide film formed on silicon wafers**, to provide grooves and holes in preparation for the production of electronic circuits.
- Compared with existing etching gases, it ensures **better processability** (giving finer and deeper grooves/holes) and **selectivity** (affecting oxide films only).
- Furthermore, the **global warming potential (GWP)** of C4F6 is less than 0.1, approximately 1/100,000 that of other fluorine-based etching gases. (GWP for CO2 is 1.)

Kinzhal Missile



❖ Context

- Russia has said it has twice deployed its newest **Kinzhal (Dagger) hypersonic missile** in Ukraine.

❖ Key Highlights

- It is **air to surface ballistic missile**, which flies at a speed of **Mach 10** (10 times the speed of sound).
- It can perform evasive manoeuvres at every stage of flight making it **harder for air defence systems to track and intercept**.
- With range of **1500-2000 kms** it can carry **both conventional and nuclear warheads**.
- Unveiled by Russia in 2018, it has been described as an "ideal weapon", a "**next generation**" weapon. Several countries, including China and US, are working on the technology.

Types of missile on the basis of speed

Hypersonic	Mach 5
Supersonic	Mach 2 - 3
Subsonic	Mach 0.8

India-Japan Sustainable Development Initiative for the NER



❖ Context

- India and Japan, during the annual summit, has decided to launch the initiative for infrastructure development of the North Eastern region of India.

❖ Key Highlights

- It includes both ongoing and future projects in various fields ranging from sustainable agriculture to cultural exchange to improving connectivity.
- India and Japan established the **Act East Forum (AEF)** in 2017 for
 - Development of the North Eastern region of India (NER).
 - To promote connectivity within this region and between this region and Southeast Asia.
- AEF reflects the synergy between India's Act East Policy and Japan's vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific.
- The scope of activities under the Initiative will be covered under the umbrella of AEF.

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